Would you do as Marion did if you had $5,000?

MY QUEEN

A WEEKLY JOURNAL FOR YOUNG WOMEN

No. 7. PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

MARION MARLOWE'S MONEY

OR

BRAVE WORK IN THE SLUMS

BY GRACE SHIRLEY

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY STREET & SMITH, 238 William Street, New York City.

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Entered at New York Post-Office as Second-Class Matter.

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Issued Weekly. By Subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, *238 William St., N. Y. Entered According to Act of Congress in the year 1900, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.*

No. 7. NEW YORK, November 10, 1900. Price Five Cents

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BRAVE WORK IN THE SLUMS.

By GRACE SHIRLEY.

CHAPTER I.

MARION'S GENEROUS HEART.

It was a warm spring morning and the streets of New York were already beginning to look deserted.

Men and women who were too poor to fly to the mountains or seashore went listlessly to their work with that dejected air which always accompanies the first breath of summer.

Just as a church clock tolled eleven, a beautiful girl with great gray eyes and magnificent chestnut hair came tripping along Fourth avenue toward Twentieth street. She was dressed neatly and stylishly in a dark blue skirt with a white shirt waist, a dainty leather belt girdled her symmetrical waist, while a jaunty sailor hat was perched becomingly on her waving tresses.

As she walked along every one who observed her turned and looked after her admiringly, for she was more than usually attractive both in face and figure.

"She's a stunner, ain't she!" said a roguish-faced newsboy to his companion; "jest git onter ther style! I'll bet she's an empress or sumthin'!"

"Oh, come off, Ted! Don't youse be gittin' stuck on yer betters!" was the reproving answer.

"Wot's de matter wid Sue Riley, I'd like ter know? I'll tell 'er youse got stuck on er loidy an' she'll scratch yer peepers out de nex 'time she sees yer!"

The young girl heard nothing of this exciting conversation. She had stopped on a corner, apparently looking for a car, and as she waited she glanced around in a careless manner.

Just then the swinging doors of a savings

bank very near the corner were opened and a wrinkled and crippled old woman came slowly down the steps toward the sidewalk.

In an instant the young girl sprang to the old woman's aid.

"Let me help you down the steps, madam," she said, sweetly; "I see that you are lame, and there is danger of falling!"

The old woman gave her a sharp glance from her sunken eyes. In an instant she seemed charmed by the young girl's appearance.

"Thank'ee," she said, in a cracked and quavering voice. "You're a good girl, miss, to want to help a poor old woman."

"I am always glad to help them," said the young girl, quickly. "I shall be old myself some day if I live so long, and oh, I think it would be dreadful not to be pitied and respected!"

"Well, I don't get much of either, I can tell you," said the old woman, querulously, as she reached the sidewalk. "I had a family once, but there's none of 'em with me now. They all got tired of taking care of their poor old mother."

"Oh, how cruel!" cried the girl, with a flush of indignation. "Why, I would work my fingers to the bone to take care of my mother."

"So you have a mother, have you? Where does she live?" asked the old woman, quickly.

"My mother lives in the country, at a place called Hickorytown, in Connecticut," was the pleasant answer; "I lived there, too, until a few months ago, but then I came to the city to earn my living."

"What, alone?" asked the woman, who was still clinging to her arm.

"I had a twin sister with me," said her companion, more slowly. "She is married now and lives in a flat in Harlem."

"Oh, then you have some one to protect you—you are not entirely alone," said the woman, with a tone in her voice that made the young girl stare a little.

"I protect myself always," she said proudly, "and just now I am living at a small hotel. I am having my voice cultivated, and am therefore living near my teacher. My name is Marion Marlowe," she added, pleasantly.

The old woman released her hold of her arm and moved a few steps away. She seemed to want to be at a distance in order to scrutinize the girl rather than to part company with her.

As she hobbled along her keen eyes were constantly upon her, as though she were trying to read her through and through, and at the same time she studied every outline of her figure.

"You must have money, Miss Marlowe," she said, after a brief pause. "You couldn't board at a hotel if you didn't have money."

Marion had seen her charge safely across the street now, but she walked on by her side as she answered the question.

"I have a little," she said, very cautiously; "I earned it myself, and I am trying to cultivate my voice. When I am able to sing in opera I hope to make my fortune."

A smile of triumph had lighted her face, and as she turned toward her companion she looked wondrously beautiful.

"I hope you will, I am sure," said the old woman, sharply. She seemed to be thinking of something that was not over-pleasant.

"Well, I must bid you good-morning," said Marion, halting; "I have an errand to do and it is late. I hope you will reach home safely. But, dear me, what is the matter?"

This last remark was made in an excited tone, for the woman had suddenly stopped short and was staring wildly at somebody or something.

"Oh, don't leave me, miss!" she cried, in a whisper. "Do you see that fellow over there? He is watching me, dearie! He is a thief,

I am sure, and he has seen me come from the bank! Just as like as not he will follow and rob me of my savings!"

She had a small, shabby, black bag in her hands, which she clutched tightly as she spoke, and in an instant the young girl had grasped the situation. She gave a sharp look at the fellow, who was a coarse, vulgar-looking individual, and then moved a trifle closer to the frightened old woman.

"Where do you live?" she asked, quickly. "I'll go home with you if you wish! It is not safe for a woman of your age to be carrying much money!"

"Oh, it isn't much," said the old woman, shrewdly. "It is only a few dollars, but it's all I've got in the world! If the wretch should steal it I'd have to go to the poor house!"

"He shall not touch it!" cried the girl, with spirit; "but perhaps it will be safer if I speak to this policeman!"

There was a big, burly bluecoat standing on the next corner, but at Marion's suggestion the old woman turned pale and actually trembled.

"Oh, no, don't speak to him!" she said, in a whisper. "I am sure you can protect me if you only will! I wouldn't call on him for the world—he would only say that I was silly. You see, these policemen stand in with all the rascals and rogues," she added, knowingly. "As like as not he'd rather the fellow would rob me, for perhaps he would get half of the money."

The young girl stopped and stared at her. She had never before heard any one say such things of a policeman.

"I am sure you must be mistaken," she said, rather sternly. "I can't believe that of the men who are our sworn protectors."

"I think you are somewhat green," said the old woman, irritably.

The officer had moved away, so she was no longer afraid.

"Come, hurry!" she said sharply, as she caught hold of Marion's arm; "I live only three blocks away, just over on First avenue. Come home with me, please; I shall be so thankful to you! Oh, if I should lose my money I am sure I should go crazy!"

Marion turned her head and gave a sharp glance behind them.

"Hurry as fast as you can," she said softly to the woman; "that fellow is coming! I am sure he is following us!"

CHAPTER II.

OLD MOTHER NANCE.

Marion and her charge had nearly reached First avenue when with a few rapid strides the great, burly fellow passed them.

There were very few people in sight and no policeman, but the young girl was walking close to the old woman and was determined to protect her.

Suddenly the man wheeled around and stopped directly in their path. There was a sneer on his face as he stared straight at the old woman.

"Well done, Mother Nance!" he said, with a coarse laugh; "you're a corker, you are; but come, hand over that money!"

"Never!" cried the old woman, in a high, shrill voice.

She clutched the bag tightly in her skinny hands and crouched behind Marion for protection.

"How dare you!" cried the young girl, her beautiful eyes flashing with anger. "Don't you touch her or her money! If you do you shall suffer for it!"

The fellow took a sharp look around, but there was nothing to fear. A few dirty children playing in the street were the only beings visible.

"Stand aside, miss!" he said, coarsely; "I ain't got no quarrel wid you! I want that old hag's boodle an' I'm a-goin' ter have it!"

"Not if I can help it!" cried Marion, moving directly in his path. "Take another step toward her and I will rouse the block in an instant!"

There was a ring in her voice that made the fellow hesitate. He had no wish to draw a crowd just at this particular moment.

Suddenly the old woman made a move that astonished Marion. She stepped boldly from behind her, holding the bag above her head, and in her shrill, cracked voice cried out to the fellow:

"Touch it if you dare, you miserable scoundrel! It is all I have got, and I am old enough to be your mother! Touch it, I say, and may all the curses of Heaven fall upon you!"

For just an instant the burly figure was motionless; then with a quick spring he seized the bag, tearing it from the old woman's hands, and as Marion gave a shriek for help he turned and fled around the corner.

"Oh, how foolish of you!" cried the girl, as she started to dart after him.

The old woman caught her by the arm with a determined grip. It was wonderful, the strength in those flabby muscles.

"You tempted him, madam!" went on Marion, excitedly; "and now he is gone. Oh! you must have been crazy!"

"Not so crazy as you think," said the old woman, chuckling; "but come quickly before any one answers your cry! See, they are coming from all directions! This way, miss, hurry!"

She clutched Marion tighter and almost dragged her into an alleyway which wound in and out among the buildings in a most confusing manner.

After five minutes of rapid motion they came to a rear door which seemed to belong to a building on First avenue.

The old woman dragged Marion in and slammed the door behind her; then to the young girl's astonishment, she proceeded to lock it.

The room they had entered was a sort of basement. It was gloomy and damp and exceedingly dirty.

As Marion peered about she saw a number of bundles of rags, and the odor that came from them was decidedly obnoxious.

"Oh, madam, what is this place that you have brought me into?" she asked, wildly. "It is a dreadful place I am sure—it smells simply awful! I cannot understand your extraordinary actions!"

She was standing in the middle of the hideous room, her heart beating fiercely, for at last she was beginning to feel a presentiment of danger.

"Hush!" said the old woman, in curiously softened tones, "don't be frightened, dearie, nobody shall harm you!"

She had mounted on a broken chair and was peering carefully through a small grated window, but after a moment she descended in a wonderfully agile manner for one of her supposed years.

"But why do you lock the door so carefully?" asked Marion; "and why in the world did you not wait and tell an officer what had happened?"

The old woman began chuckling and rubbing her skinny hands together. Her form shook with merriment and her small eyes twinkled curiously.

"He did not get my money; he got only an empty bag," she cackled. "Oh, a thief has got to be a sharp one to get ahead of the old woman!"

"Well, I should say so!" said Marion, with a sigh of relief. She was staring at the woman in the keenest wonder.

"Old Mother Nance knows a thing or two," went on the old hag. "There's not a thief not a policeman in New York that can

catch her! See!" she screamed, shrilly, "here is my money all safe! Three thousand dollars! What do you think of that, dearie?"

"Why, you told me it was only a few dollars," cried the young girl, in astonishment, as she saw the big roll. "Do you mean to say that you tell falsehoods, madam?"

There was a tone of horror in her voice as she asked the question. She could not bear to think so badly of this woman.

"It is only a few dollars to me," said the old woman, in her hideous cackle. "Why, I have ten times as much more in other banks in the city."

She had seated herself on a bundle of rags and was watching Marion as closely as a cat would watch a mouse, and her eyes glittered with amusement as she saw the girl's look of wonder.

"Didn't dream I was so rich, did you, dearie?" she asked. "Thought I was just a poor old woman who needed to be protected?"

"I thought you were a good woman, to say the least," said Marion, sharply; "if I hadn't I should not have been so willing to aid and protect you. It seems that my kindness has been wasted, madam! I sought to do you a favor, and here I am, imprisoned."

"Oh, no! Not imprisoned!" cried the old woman, quickly. "I just wanted you to stay here till the danger was past! We'll go upstairs in a minute. Oh, I have elegant apartments, dearie! You shall have a suite all to yourself and I'll give you diamonds and fine dresses!"

"What for?" asked Marion, with a shudder of horror. She was beginning to think that the woman was crazy.

"What for? Why to show you that I appreciate your kindness to a poor old woman," said the vicious hag, chuckling. "Old Mother Nance never forgets a friend, no, nor an enemy either—but come along, dearie?"

She pulled a rusty key from her pocket and opened a door. As it swung on its hinges Marion leaned forward and tried to peer behind it.

"Come," said the woman again, "we will go upstairs now! I'm in a hurry, my pretty one, to show you your beautiful apartments!"

Marion Marlowe advanced a step nearer to the old woman's side, and her voice rang out like a bugle as she cried indignantly:

"I will not move one step until you have given me that key and all the other keys that you have in your possession! You are a bad, wicked woman, and I am not to be fooled twice! If you imprison me in this house it will be because you are stronger than I!"

"Do you mean that you will take my keys away from me by force if I refuse to give them to you?" whined the old woman, at the same time taking a step nearer to the wall, where Marion could see an electric button.

With a wonderfully quick movement the young girl sprang before her.

"Heaven forgive me for harming a woman old enough to be my mother!" she cried sharply, "but if you touch that bell I shall not answer for my actions. You must see, Mother Nance, that you have driven me to desperation!"

CHAPTER III.

MARION TURNS THE TABLES ON HER JAILER.

While the wicked old woman was holding Marion a prisoner in her cellar there were events transpiring in the room above their heads which would have interested her greatly if she had known their import to her.

A young man, cleverly disguised, was pacing back and forth in "Mother Nance's" really handsome parlor while a young girl, haggard and pale from want of sunlight, was carefully examining a parcel which he had just then handed to her.

"Well, how much do I get for it?" asked the young man, sharply. "You've been staring at it for half an hour—you can't be greatly experienced as an appraiser."

There was a trace of irony in his tones that the girl did not fail to notice. Her head drooped lower on her breast as she again examined the contents of the parcel.

"I will give you ten dollars for the bracelet," she said, after a pause, "but I don't know about the earrings. Mother Nance must see them."

"Humph!" ejaculated the young man, advancing nearer to the girl. "Ten dollars wouldn't pay me for my time and trouble. That bracelet is worth twenty dollars if it is worth a penny."

"I can't help it," said the girl, wearily; "I don't dare do any differently. I've already been punished enough for making mistakes."

"What, does Mother Nance punish you?" asked the young man, sharply. There was a look in his eyes which he could not control for a minute.

"She beats me cruelly and for nothing at all," replied the girl, with a shiver. "Sometimes I can't believe that she really is my mother."

"Well, she's a tyrant if she is; that's all I've got to say," said the young fellow, hotly, "but I say, Mag, why don't you bolt? You could do better without her."

The girl shrugged her shoulders and shook her head slowly.

"I've tried it twice," she said, in despairing tones, "and both times she found me and nearly killed me."

"But can't you go to some other city?" asked the man, eagerly. He was standing very close to her now and gazing down at her pityingly.

"No use; Mother Nance has friends everywhere," was the answer. "She'd send out a general alarm to every crook in the country. The result would be that I'd be found by some one or other of them, or else they'd hold me a prisoner in hopes of getting ransom from her. Oh, if I could only go to some lonely place in the country! It is there that I would be safe—but, of course, that is out of the question."

She drew a long sigh and the tears sprang to her eyes. As the young man gazed at her he saw that she was almost pretty.

"Not a feature in her face like the old hag's," he thought. "I believe the girl is right. Old Nance isn't her mother."

Aloud he said:

"But why not a country place, then? If you feel that you would be safe there why don't you skip this very minute?"

"What would I do in a little village?" asked the girl quickly. "No one would know me. I am nobody nor nothing! I can't teach or sew or earn my living anyhow, and you know a woman must be useful and good to be respected in a village!"

The young man sat down by her and took her hand in his.

"How do you know so much about the country, Mag?" he asked, softly. "I thought you were one of us—born and bred in the city."

"I have been told so—always," was the girl's thoughtful answer, "but someway I am forever thinking and dreaming of country scenes. It seems to me I must have lived there at some time—long, long ago! Oh, it is cruel—this life—when I so long for liberty and the country!"

"Mag!"

The young man uttered the word in a cautious whisper.

"What is to hinder your starting this minute for the country? Mother Nance is out and the street door is unlocked. Put your hat on and fly—she'll never catch you!"

"But I have no money!" whispered the girl, her eyes flashing with eagerness.

"Take it! There's plenty in the house I'll be bound! And who has a better right to it, Mag, than you who have helped to earn it!"

"I haven't! Oh, I haven't!" cried the girl, misunderstanding him. "I have never stolen a cent—never done a thing dishonest! That is why Mother Nance beats me—to make me a thief—but she can't do it! She can't do it! I was born honest and I will die so!"

"Then you are certainly not the old woman's daughter," said the young man, decidedly, "but see here, Mag, if you'll go I will give you the money. Give me back my stuff; and see, here are fifty dollars!"

The pale, thin face grew radiant with pleasure. She handed the parcel back quickly and then clasped her hands together.

"I'll find a way to send you some more," went on the young man. "I'll give you an address where you can write to me, and you can make believe I am your brother. There, Mag, go and live in the country, where you can be free and happy. You are too good a girl to live this life any longer."

In a burst of gratitude the young girl seized his hand and kissed it.

"Oh, you are so good, so good!" she murmured tearfully, "and to think I have only seen you twice. I do not even know you."

"Well, you'll know me better some day—and so will Mother Nance," said the young man, laughing, as with an almost unconscious motion he stroked his false beard and mustache.

"Now get your hat, Mag, and take what clothes you need. I'll keep guard over the front door until you are ready to close it behind you."

"I'll do it!" whispered the girl, with a sudden determination. "I'll run away once more, and this time she shall not find me, or, if she does, I'll kill myself before I'll come back into her clutches!"

She bounded toward the door that led into the hall, but just as she touched the knob it flew violently open.

A beautiful young girl stood before them on the threshold. Her eyes were shining like diamonds and she was panting and breathless.

"Great Scott! Marion Marlowe!" whispered the young man under his breath—then he suddenly recollected the role that he was playing.

"Quick! Let me out of this place!" cried the excited newcomer, sharply, "I have been lured here by a dreadful, wicked old woman! I helped her on the street when she said a thief was following her—and this is the way that she has repaid me! She has made me a prisoner!"

"Did Mother Nance do that?" asked the young man, stepping forward. "Did she meet you on the street and lure you to this building?"

"Yes, and she would have locked me in the cellar, but I turned the tables on her!" cried the girl, hysterically, as she held up two keys. "She was just on the verge of calling for help when I took these away from her!"

"And where is she now?" asked Mag, breathlessly.

The beautiful face flushed with amusement as the new-comer burst out laughing:

"She's sitting with her rags in the basement," she said, merrily; "both doors are locked, and I am her jailer. It was a struggle between us, and I was the stronger of the two!"

"Hurrah! Things couldn't be better!" cried the young man, softly. "Quick, Mag, get your duds on and skip the town. Thanks to this brave young lady, you will have ample opportunity."

"Oh, is she a prisoner, too?" asked Marion quickly, at the same time glancing curiously at the parcel of jewelry which the young fellow in his excitement had forgotten to cover.

The girl darted out of the room, leaving her companion to explain.

"She was indeed a prisoner, but her liberty is at hand, thanks to your aid," was the answer as the man slipped the parcel into his pocket.

Ten minutes later the three young people hurried swiftly from the house.

The two rusty keys were in the young man's pocket, and, so far as they knew, Old Mother Nance was still a prisoner in her own cellar.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE TRACK OF A THIEF.

An hour after this adventure in the house of Mother Nance two people stood together on the platform of the Grand Central Station. One was the disguised young man and the other was Marion Marlowe, and both were thinking the same thoughts and expressing the same good wishes.

For the train that passed through Hickorytown, Connecticut, had left, carrying Maggie Lewis with it, and the two who remained were busily talking it over.

"Thank Heaven, Mag is out of that old woman's clutches at last!" said the young man, earnestly. "She is a good girl, I am sure, and I am glad to see her get a chance to do better."

"She will be safe with my parents, but do please tell me all you know about her," said Marion, eagerly. "This whole affair has passed so quickly that I am just a little bit bewildered."

"I don't wonder," replied the young man, with a glance of admiration, "but you are the coolest girl I ever saw. Why, you weren't even rattled!"

"I felt so, but perhaps I did not show it," said the young girl, laughing. "I always endeavor to keep my head in all emergencies."

"Well, you are a dandy, that's all I've got to say!" was the answer. "You have missed your calling. You ought to be a detective!"

"Perhaps I shall be some day; I've been almost everything else," said Marion, laughing; "but do hurry with Mag's story, I'm so anxious to hear it!"

"Will you excuse me a minute, miss?" asked the young man, suddenly.

There was a train just coming in, and he turned as if to observe it. Before Marion could reply he had removed his false beard and mustache from his face and was coolly stuffing them into his pocket.

"Mr. Fairfax! Is it possible!" whispered the girl in astonishment, as she recognized a young man whom she had met on several occasions.

"Hush! Say nothing! I don't wish to attract any more attention than is necessary!" said the young man, quickly. "I am taking big chances in removing my disguise up here, but the things were growing mighty hot and uncomfortable."

"I should say so," said Marion, as she hurried out of the station.

Fortunately, in the crush of passengers from an incoming train, her companion's act had not been noticed.

"Now I'll explain about Mag," he said, as they reached the street, "and incidentally I'll explain about myself, Miss Marlowe. You see, it is this way. I left my position on the newspaper last week and took up a new vocation, and, well, this case of Mag's was brought to my notice. Some parties are interested in endeavoring to learn who she is, as there is strong reason to suppose that Old Nance has stolen her."

"How awful!" gasped Marion, "but go on, Mr. Fairfax. I am sure you are going to find a way to punish her."

"You've done that already!" cried the young man, roaring. "Oh, I'll bet she is rav-

ing by this time, if she is still locked in that cellar!"

"She can ring that bell, and no doubt some one will let her out! It isn't a very nice place to stay in, I can tell you!" said Marion, as she joined in the laughter. "Why, do you know it looked like the descriptions I've read of a ragpicker's cellar; and to think that she had three thousand dollars in her pocket!"

"Did you see it?" asked Fairfax, with an interested glance.

"I did, indeed! And, oh, how uncanny she looked, sitting on top of a bundle of rags, clutching all that money! I'm glad I had spunk enough to take the keys away from her!"

"You've got spunk enough for anything," said her companion, admiringly, "and you need it all, I guess, Miss Marlowe. Our mutual friend, Miss Allyn, has told me a lot about you, and I'm sure that kind heart of yours is forever getting you into danger! But to return to Mag; the girl is sure she is not the old woman's daughter, and the very fact that she is honest is proof that she is right. Why, do you know, she would not steal even though the old hag beat her unmercifully!"

"Is Mother Nance a thief?" asked Marion, in a horrified whisper.

The young man shrugged his shoulders and frowned as he answered.

"She is everything—that woman! Why, she runs a regular 'fence'! Receiver of stolen goods—harbors 'bunco men' and 'sharpers'! There's nothing evil and vicious that she doesn't do. Her very act of luring you to her den should tell you the rest, Miss Marlowe!"

Marion shivered and paled as she thought of what she had escaped, but it was hardly possible for her to comprehend such viciousness.

"Well, Maggie is safely out of her clutches, at any rate," she said, thankfully. "Oh, I am so glad that I thought to send her to my mother!"

"And, thanks to your generosity, she can stay there for some time," said Mr. Fairfax, quickly. "It was noble of you, Miss Marlowe, to promise her that hundred dollars."

"She shall have every cent of it," said Marion, firmly. "I shall send her ten dollars a week until she has it all. But you gave her almost as much," she added, smiling. "You and I believe in putting our money to good use, Mr. Fairfax! Poor Maggie must be our common charge for the present, but, you see, I am 'killing two birds with one stone,' for that money will go for board to my mother and father. Oh, it will please them wonderfully to think that they are earning some money! You see, they have had to depend upon me a great deal of late, and I made Maggie promise not to tell who was supplying her with funds."

"You are as modest as you are thoughtful," was the young man's answer. "It is not every young girl that would be so generous."

Marion flushed with pleasure, but did not speak. It had been a source of great satisfaction to her to be enabled to assist Maggie. She had only recently come into possession of a little money—five thousand dollars—all earned through her own heroism, and which seemed to her to be almost a fortune.

Through her courageous efforts a terrible crime had been exposed, and the five thousand dollars was her share of a reward which had been publicly offered by the father of the victim.

Marion, Mr. Villard and a Dr. Brookes had unveiled a secret that thrilled every heart in the city, but with her usual modesty the young girl had slipped out of sight and was now living quietly and trying to do good with her money. (See No. 6 of "My Queen" for the story of the incident mentioned.)

After Mr. Fairfax had spoken there was silence for some minutes, and they walked slowly along in the direction of Fifth avenue.

"Well, I hope to learn the truth about the poor girl," said the young man, earnestly. "For some reason, I have taken a genuine interest in her, and I'd like to know if it is true that old Nance stole her. I guess I'm soft hearted," he added, slyly; "anyway, I fall in love with pretty girls in a jiffy when I meet them, and somehow I am always possessed of an inordinate desire to help them."

"You have a noble heart to feel that way," was Marion's honest answer. "Oh, I have heard of you, too, you know, Mr. Fairfax, and then I know you must be good to be a friend of Miss Allyn's!"

The young man actually blushed, but Marion was too much in earnest to notice it. She was interested in him for two excellent reasons—one because he was the friend of her dearest chum, the other was because she had just obtained a glimpse of his really noble nature.

In the excitement of what had passed she gave no thought to the "new vocation" that he spoke of, but all of a sudden she became curious to know how it happened that he was in that house, if Mother Nance was such a notorious character.

"But, Mr. Fairfax," she said, earnestly, "are you not running great risks? Is this terrible woman's home a place for you to enter?"

"The end justifies the means, does it not, Miss Marlowe?" was the evasive answer. "How else could I have helped poor Mag to gain her freedom?"

"That is so," said the girl, softly, "and it only proves your sincerity. You must be clever, to know how to manage such people."

A sudden burst of laughter followed her remark.

"Do you wish to know my excuse for entering that place?" he asked, gayly, "for, of course, you must know that no one would go there, except on business."

Marion looked at him eagerly. She was very anxious to know.

"I was trying to dispose of some stolen jewelry," he said, candidly. "I have been there before on a similar errand."

"Mercy!" cried Marion. "You don't mean that, Mr. Fairfax! Were you honestly and truly trying to dispose of them?"

"Well, I would not have sold them until I gained my point," he said, laughing. "The jewels were a bluff—I had to have an excuse of some kind."

He was proceeding to explain, when his companion suddenly caught his arm.

"Quick! Look at that man! The big, burly one just ahead of us!" she whispered, softly. "That is the thief who tried to rob that wicked old woman! Do you know, I'm almost sorry that he didn't do it!"

"Gee whiz! That is Bob Bennett, one of the worst on the list!" was her companion's quick answer. "Do excuse me, Miss Marlowe, but I'm very anxious to get a good look at him."

He turned and gazed at Marion eagerly.

"Go, then," she urged, without the slightest hesitation. "Don't mind me, Mr. Fairfax; I can reach home all right; but do please let me know if you find out anything about Maggie. I am stopping at the Rosedale on Twentieth street."

The young man raised his hat and darted away.

In less than a minute Marion lost sight of them both, but Mr. Fairfax had no idea of losing sight of the thief; on the contrary, he was following him as faithfully as a shadow

CHAPTER V.

A BREATH OF SUSPICION.

An hour later Marion was tapping lightly on her music teacher's door. Their rooms were near together in a quiet little hotel on Twentieth street.

"Oh, Miss Marlowe, come in quick!" cried Madame Leopold, as she opened the door. "What do you think? I have been robbed! Some one has taken all my jewels!"

She was a large, florid-faced woman, but her cheeks were like ashes now, and her strong, melodious voice was trembling with emotion.

"Just think," she went on rapidly, "I wore them only last week! Now they are gone completely—there is not a trace of them!"

"It is dreadful!" cried Marion, her eyes filling from sympathy. "Have you notified the authorities, madame? Perhaps they can find them."

"Oh, I am afraid not! I know how such things go," said the lady, disconsolately. "They are probably all in the pawn shops before this—and to think they were the jewels that belonged to my dear mother!"

"Oh, then they are not those beautiful diamonds!" cried Marion, quickly.

"Dear me, no! I almost wish they were," was the answer. "They were old-fashioned gems that I always kept in my trunk. I rarely ever wore them except when I was singing in costume."

There was nothing to be done, so after a time they walked around to the madame's studio, which was on Fifth avenue, a few blocks from the hotel.

"I'm afraid you do not feel much in the mood to give me a lesson to-day, madame," said Marion, earnestly. "Please don't bother about it if you are too nervous."

"On the contrary, it will relieve me," was the woman's prompt answer: "your voice always soothes me, my dear, it is so sweetly sympathetic—ah, I would love to hear you in grand opera!"

"Will I ever be able to sing like that?" asked Marion, breathlessly. "Oh, madame, do you really think that I shall ever be fit for grand opera?"

The madame laughed happily, for she was really very fond of her pupil.

"Why, Miss Marlowe, you could almost do it now," she said, candidly; "all in the world that you need is a better knowledge of the actress' art and the strength to sing steadily without injuring your muscles."

In an instant the young girl had flushed scarlet with pleasure, and as they walked onward down the avenue she drifted into a pleasant dream of airy castles.

Oh, if the day would ever come how happy she would be! To be a singer of grand opera was her highest ambition.

"I could support father and mother in luxury," she thought, "and, oh, wouldn't I do a world of good with my money!"

This thought led her back to her experience of the morning, and she began wondering how poor Maggie would fancy living on the old farm where there was nothing to be seen but cows and pigs and chickens. Suddenly it occurred to her that she was acting very rudely toward her teacher, for that lady was talking to her and Marion was not even listening.

"One was a bracelet—a perfect beauty," the lady was saying. "Of course it was old-fashioned, but it was so odd and quaint. I have never seen one like it."

"Do tell me the design," said Marion, quickly. She was trying to make amends for her inattention.

"A Cleopatra asp bracelet, I believe they called it," was the answer, "but unlike most snake bracelets it had a three-pronged tail, and each was studded for half an inch with tiny green diamonds."

"And did it have a very small head and emerald eyes?" asked Marion, quickly, then bit her lips in a momentary confusion.

The madame wheeled around and confronted her with amazement.

"How did you know how to describe it?" she asked, breathlessly. "Why, I am certain that you have never seen those gems, Miss Marlowe."

"Well, I am not so certain that I have not seen them—and this very day, too," answered Marion, slowly. "Oh, madame, do go on and describe the others! Was there a pair of old-fashioned pendant earrings?"

"Indeed there was!" cried the music teacher, excitedly. "They were set in silver, and there were three separate pendants. Oh, Miss Marlowe, you know something; quick, tell me what it is! Has any one you know at the hotel stolen my jewels?"

"No, madame, not that I know of," said Marion quickly, "but I have seen some jewels to-day that answer to your description; I beg that you will not force me to reply to any further questions! Give me twenty-four hours, and perhaps I can get them."

Madame Leopold stared at her with a curious expression. It seemed almost like suspicion, and as Marion saw it she blushed furiously.

"I must be cautious, dear madame," she said, very earnestly. "You know it is easy to be mistaken and it would be dreadful if I should ever accuse any one wrongfully."

"It certainly would," said her companion, slowly. "I will trust you, Miss Marlowe, and I am sure you are not mistaken. There is not another such a bracelet to be found in creation."

"You must excuse me from my lesson," said Marion, firmly. "It is my duty to attend to this matter at once. I know by what I have said I have made you suspicious, madame. In justice to myself I must hurry and end it."

"But will you not tell me where you saw the gems?" asked the lady, frowning. "Surely it would do no harm, and perhaps I can help you find them."

"Oh, I can't! Please don't ask me!" cried Marion, sharply. "I wouldn't for the world wrong an innocent creature—and I am positive that the person who has your jewels is as innocent as I am at this very minute."

"I don't just see how that can be," said the woman, dubiously; but with a murmured apology Marion hastily left her.

"That is very strange," said Madame Leopold to herself, as she looked after her a moment. "She has seen my jewels, yet she will not say where. Well, I suppose I am stupid that I did not force her to tell—but I can't believe that the girl is not innocent."

She walked on slowly, her brow wrinkled with thought. She was sorely puzzled over the actions of her beautiful pupil.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EPISODE IN A CAR.

As Marion darted away her brain was in a turmoil. She had no idea where Mr. Fairfax lived, and yet she knew that she must see him immediately.

"I can get his address from Alma," she thought. "They worked together on the *Star* for a long time, and, although he has given up his position, she will probably know where to find him." She sprang onto a car and started downtown, her mind fully made up to go directly to the newspaper office.

It was an electric car and was fairly well crowded; as the day was warm, every one seemed out of sorts and restless.

"The tarnallest kind o' weather, this here," suddenly exclaimed a voice in her ear. "Will you take my seat, miss, you look fagged out completely."

Marion looked up quickly. It was an old countryman who had spoken. His accent

smacked of the farm, but his words were courteous and gentle.

"Oh, thank you!" said the girl, as she sank into the seat. "It is warm and I am tired, although I believe I had not realized it."

A moment later the countryman secured a seat by her side. He seemed nervous and uneasy, and, after a short time had elapsed, he turned and addressed her.

"You'll excuse me, miss, but I'm a stranger here. I'm on my way tew Police Headquarters, and I don't 'zactly know the way; maybe you could direct me—yew look more civil than the conductor."

Marion smiled a little as she made answer:

"If you get off at Houston street, you will be very near," she began, and at that instant the car stopped with a jolt that nearly threw her over on the gentleman's shoulder.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" she cried, glancing up into his face.

There was no answer whatever. Her neighbor had not even heard her.

He sat staring fixedly at a young woman who had just entered the car, a pale, haggard creature, whose clothing was cheap and tawdry.

Marion watched him curiously, but at length he turned to her again, breathing a deep sigh as he did so that spoke both of disappointment and relief.

"Not her, thank God!" Marion heard him mutter, and just then she saw that they were nearing his corner.

"You must get off here, sir," she said, touching him on the arm. "Walk one block east, then any one will show you the building."

With a hasty "thank you," the man left the car, brushing past another shabby young woman who got on just at that moment.

Marion watched him with a feeling of sympathy as she saw him turn in the direction of the Mulberry street building.

"Oh, I hope his errand there is not a sad one," she thought; "if it is I am sorry for him, for I, too, have taken that journey to Headquarters, and I know exactly how his heart is aching."

She was thinking deeply of her own bitter experience when, as a poor country girl, she had come to the big city to find her sister—the dainty bride, who, thanks to her noble sister, was now safe and sound in the home of a true husband.

A sharp cough aroused her, and she glanced around to find that the poor girl who had just entered had taken the seat beside her. Marion noticed that she was ill, although she seemed alert and cheerful.

A crowd of people boarded the car at the next two crossings and the discomfort of the passengers was soon even more marked and general

They jostled and pushed each other as they reached for the straps, and harsh words were exchanged in the most generous manner.

Presently the young girl at Marion's side moved suddenly. She began staring about her as if searching for something; then, with a sharp cry of agony, she sprang up and called out to the conductor:

"Stop! There's a thief on this car! My pocket-book has been stolen! Oh, what shall I do? They've taken every penny!"

She began wringing her hands and the tears streamed down her face.

Marion felt her heart aching with sympathy for the poor unfortunate.

"Why didn't you hold on to your purse?" asked the conductor surlily, as he pushed the passengers about rudely and glanced around for the missing article.

"Here, you needn't shove me!" cried a burly fellow. "I'm uncomfortable enough now—get off of my feet, you lubber!"

"Oh, you must find it—you must!" shrieked

the girl, hysterically. "There was five dollars in it—all I had in the world! Oh, I'll be put out in the street if I can't find my money!"

"You sit down and keep quiet or else get off'n the car," ordered the conductor, brutally. "Can't you see what a disturbance you are kicking up! We ain't responsible for your loss. This is a public conveyance."

"You don't look like a woman that needs to be told that," said a coarse-looking man as the girl sat down. "You look as if you could take care of yourself; ten to one you didn't have a cent and it's a game you're a playin'."

The girl's hollow eyes flashed as she looked at him scornfully.

"It is as true as gospel," she cried out fiercely, "but, of course, I don't expect anyone to believe it. It wouldn't seem natural to be believed! If a poor girl is robbed she must stand it—there's no justice for poor people!"

"Oh, I am sure we all believe you, miss," spoke up Marion, quickly, "and I for one am very sorry for you! We are all at the mercy of thieves in this city, but I am sure that the most of us are willing to help each other."

She drew a five-dollar bill from her purse as she spoke and slipped it into the girl's hand in the most sympathetic manner.

"I am sure you need it, and I don't," she said, sweetly. "Do please accept it from me as you would from your own sister."

Every person in the car was staring at them now, but before the girl could reply a terrible thing happened.

There was a sudden report, then a blinding flash of light. The car stopped with a jerk that threw the passengers in a mass together and at the same time each felt a slight shock of electricity darting through their veins.

For an instant all was the wildest confusion. Women shrieked and men cursed, while they pushed and trampled upon each other.

The rear door was open, and it was toward this that all struggled, the strong trampling down the weak in their mad rush for extrication.

Marion finally dragged herself away from the struggling mass and crept toward the forward end of the car, in order to avoid being crushed or trampled upon.

As she saw safety ahead of her, she thought suddenly of the poor girl. She glanced back quickly, and saw her lying helpless upon the floor of the car.

Without an instant of hesitation, she raised her in her arms and, as the last frenzied passengers bolted for the door, she laid the girl on the seat of the now perfectly quiet car and proceeded calmly to restore her to consciousness.

CHAPTER VII.

A LESSON IN TRICKERY.

Five minutes later Marion was able to turn her charge over to a big policeman, after having the pleasure of seeing her revive and being comparatively sure that she was not seriously injured.

As the girl opened her eyes and saw Marion, alone of all the passengers, bending over her solicitously, a deep flush of shame crept over her features.

"You—you saved me," she whispered, with an agony of remorse in her voice. "And to think I just swindled you out of five dollars of your money!"

"What!" exclaimed Marion, aghast. "Is it possible that you were lying! Oh, my poor, poor girl! I can hardly believe it!"

"I tell you it is true!" cried the girl almost fiercely; "I didn't have a cent after I paid my fare. That was a put-up job to get assistance if possible—and now to think, my victim has saved me!"

"Hush! Don't say any more!" said Marion, as a group of policemen entered the car. "You are welcome to the money, for I am sure you need it, but please tell me your name and where I can find you."

"Liz Green," whispered the woman; "but I don't live anywhere in particular—and 'tain't at all likely that you'll want to see me again, either!"

She made an effort to sit up, with Marion's help.

"I guess she's all right, officer," said Marion, in her business-like way. "The shock did not hurt her, but some one must have kicked her. Oh, the way those men acted was simply outrageous!"

"All looked out for themselves and trampled on the women, I suppose," said one of the officers bluntly. "It's wonderful what brutes some men are when they have to face a little danger!"

"Well, this young lady was no coward, I'll bet!" said another of the "blue coats," as he looked admiringly at Marion. "You staid by the ship and looked after the helpless. There ain't many women that would do that, I fancy!"

"But there was no danger at all, if they had all kept cool," said Marion, simply; "I knew at once that it was only something wrong with the electricity."

She said good-by to the girl and left the car. There was another car ahead that was ready to start, so in less than five minutes she was enabled to continue her journey.

"I would never have believed that a woman could have been so deceitful," she whispered to herself, as she thought of Liz Green. "To think of her wringing her hands and shedding real tears! Why, the girl is out of her sphere; she should be an actress!"

She smiled a little, but it was a smile of sadness.

The knowledge of human nature which she was gleaning was beginning to slightly embitter her sunny disposition.

When she arrived at the *Star* office she sent in her name to Miss Allyn, the newspaper reporter, who was her dearest chum and confidant, but the card came back with the disappointing news that her friend was just then out on an assignment.

Marion racked her brain to think what she should do next. She must find Mr. Fairfax that day if possible, but she dreaded to ask his address of any one but Miss Allyn.

"I'll have to do it," she decided, after a moment's thought, and this time she sent her card in to her friend, Mr. Villard.

As he came out to the room where Marion was waiting a smile of pleasure overspread his features.

"Miss Marlowe, I am delighted!" he cried, holding out his hand. "You have done me an honor in making me this visit."

"Oh, but the honor is second-hand," said the fair girl, candidly; "I came to see Miss Allyn, but I find she is out, so I thought perhaps you could tell me what I wish. I am looking for the address of Mr. Henry Fairfax."

Mr. Villard's face clouded as he heard her errand. He seemed plunged in deep thought for the moment.

"I'm sorry, but I can't tell you," he answered finally. "When Fairfax went away he gave me his confidence, but I am not at liberty to disclose his whereabouts to any one."

"Oh, I am so very sorry!" cried Marion, desperately. "Really, I feel tempted to urge you, the matter is so important; still, my position is just like your own, I can't tell you why I wish to see Mr. Fairfax!"

They both stared at each other in great perplexity.

"I wish we might compromise in some manner," said Mr. Villard, smiling, "but his

address is not in the Directory, and no one else in the office knows it. I am very sure Miss Allyn doesn't; so you see I am the sole custodian of his secret."

"It seems very strange," said Marion, frowning; "I can't understand such secrecy at all! Why should a man be ashamed to tell his address?"

Villard bit his lips, but his face lighted after a minute.

"Fairfax is not ashamed, I can assure you," he said, quickly. "There are business reasons, I presume, for his silence; still, I am only under promise not to tell his business address. I don't know where he rooms now, but he used to live at the 'Rosedale.'"

"Why, that is where I am living!" exclaimed the young girl, excitedly: "but I have not been there quite a week, and, then, it is a fairly good-sized hotel. He could easily live there without my meeting him."

"Well, I'd ask in the office," said Mr. Villard, with a sigh of relief. "No doubt, if he has left they can tell you where he went, or a letter addressed to the 'Rosedale' would surely follow him."

"But a letter would take too long," said Marion, impulsively. "The matter must be settled to day, or I believe I shall go crazy!"

Mr. Villard looked at her pityingly, but he dared not question her.

"I hope he is not in any trouble," he ventured to say. "It would be terrible for Miss Allyn, for I believe she loves him."

Marion did not answer, only held out her hand.

"Good-by, Mr. Villard," she said, quickly. "Please don't speak of this to any one. I may be able to find Mr. Fairfax, after all, for you may depend upon it I shall scour the city thoroughly."

As she left the room Mr. Villard stared after her.

"The bravest, noblest girl in New York!" he whispered to himself. "Now, what the mischief has Fairfax done? Got himself into some scrape, I suppose, and this girl has heard of it, and for her friend Miss Allyn's sake, she is determined to get him out of it."

He started back toward the office, but before he reached the door he heard a light step on the stairs that led up from the pavement.

"It's Fairfax, by Jove!" he cried, as that young man appeared before him. "See here, man, what in thunder have you been doing, I'd like to know? Miss Marion Marlowe was just here! She's on the warpath for you!"

CHAPTER VIII.

MARION'S OFFER OF ASSISTANCE.

As Marion hurried back to the hotel she tried to think over the situation as calmly as possible, but she was terribly disturbed over her failure to find Mr. Fairfax.

Why was he trying to dispose of stolen gems to Mother Nance? Whose were the gems and where did he get them?

These questions were running through her brain, but she could not answer them. It was inexplicable to her that he should have been there on such an errand.

"He said the jewels were merely an excuse to get into the house," she reflected, "but, oh, why did I not ask him how they came in his possession!"

It had not entered the fair girl's mind to distrust him yet. She only felt that there was something which she did not understand which would clear him at once, could she only fathom it.

She knew that his motive in going to that terrible den had been merely to save poor Maggie Lewis, for he had told her honestly that he was interested in the girl and was trying to help solve the mystery of her parentage.

Marion was an unsophisticated country girl

or she might have guessed the truth, but at present she had no inkling of the young man's "new vocation."

As soon as she reached the hotel office she made inquiries of the clerk, but there was no information to be gained from that quarter.

Mr. Fairfax had left the week before, leaving no address behind him; he had said he would call occasionally for letters.

"He left the day of the robbery," said the clerk, as he consulted his ledger. "Luckily he went that morning, or he'd have shared the general suspicion!"

The words were spoken lightly, but Marion shuddered as she heard them. She was still thinking of the jewels which she knew to be in the young man's possession.

"I can't be mistaken," she thought, as she turned away, "but, oh, I wish I was! Poor Mr. Fairfax!"

She was just leaving the office when a seedy-looking stranger entered. He had a carpet bag in his hand which attracted her attention.

As they passed through the doorway he glanced at her sharply, then, much to her surprise, stopped short and spoke to her.

"By gum! Is this where you live?" he asked, with great cordiality.

Marion glanced up into his face, and then smiled good-naturedly.

"Yes, sir, I live here," she answered, simply. "Did you have any trouble in finding 'Headquarters'?"

She had recognized him at once as the countryman whom she had met in the car, and once more a feeling of sympathy for him was creeping into her heart.

"Yes, I found it," he said, sadly; "an' they told me a lot. Thar wuz a time when I couldn't have stood what I have heerd tew-day, but, thank God, I am stronger now; yes, I have the courage fer anything!"

Marion stared up at him stupidly. She could not quite understand, but she seemed to feel instinctively that she was right in giving him her sympathy.

There was a little reception-room just outside of the office, and, acting upon impulse, she turned and beckoned for him to enter it.

"Do please tell me what they told you?" she said, in her earnest voice. "I can see that you are sorrowing and, oh, sir, you remind me of my father! Do, please, let me help you if you are in any trouble!"

The honest man drew his sleeve across his eyes as he followed her into the room, and sank down upon a sofa. He seemed suffering for the comfort that this loving girl could give him, and there was no reluctance in his words or manner.

"It's jest the same old story," he said, with a weary sigh. "Jest another pure country gal who has run away frum home an' drifted ont tew destruction on the tide of the great city."

"But you have learned something of her to-day, have you not?" asked Marion, eagerly. "The chief has given you some hope! He knows something about her!"

The man brushed his eyes again and his voice trembled as he answered:

"She is in the 'slums,' he told me, ef yew know what that means. She is one of them wuthless critters that the angels pity, but whom both God and man seem to have hully desarted!"

"But you can find her! You can redeem her!" cried Marion, eagerly. "Oh, don't give up the search! Remember she is a woman!"

"An' my daughter," said the man with a sob in his voice. "Oh, I forgive her freely! God grant that I may find her!"

Marion moved closer to him and laid her hand on his arm.

"Such love as yours must be rewarded," she said, sweetly. "Not all fathers are so lenient, so merciful, or so forgiving!

Through your patient love you will win her back, for I am sure no daughter could resist a father's pleading. Let me help you," she urged, eagerly. "Let us go together! I would willingly risk my life, if necessary, to rescue a straying sister!"

There were pearly tears in her beautiful eyes, and the fair young face had grown heavenly in its sweetness.

"Thank ye, and God bless ye," murmured the man, devoutly. "Yes, yew shall go with me, ef yew will. Purhaps yew can guide me tew her!"

Marion rose from his side, trembling with emotion.

"To-night, then," she said, quickly. "To-night we will begin the search. You have only to send for me and I will be ready."

She slipped her card into his hand and then hurried away, leaving her new-found friend wiping the tears from his face and blessing her in his heart for her words of help and comfort.

"Oh, if my poor gal was only like her," he whispered, hoarsely, "but to think of my Annie a grovellin' in the slums! Oh, it will break my heart! It is horrible! horrible!"

Marion refreshed herself for an hour in the seclusion of her room, but her thoughts were in confusion; she could hardly control them.

Upon her shoulders rested the burden of proving Mr. Fairfax innocent, although up to the present no one but herself had any shadow of reason for thinking him guilty.

While she was resting quietly, a bell boy brought her a telegram. She opened it eagerly. It was from Maggie Lewis.

There was only one line, but Marion smiled as she read it; then an outburst of tears relieved her nerves almost instantly.

"Arrived all right. The country is beautiful." This was all Maggie said, but it made poor Marion homesick.

"Oh, the peace, the quiet of my old home!" she whispered, softly. "How I long for it sometimes—and yet I love the city!"

She sprang from her chair and went over to the window, where she could watch the crowded streets and hear the steady roar of traffic.

"Yes, with all its noise and confusion; with all its pain and misery, I love it, for I feel that in a city I can be of some use—in the country it is awful—it was nothing but eternal stagnation!"

There was another tap on her door and Marion hurried to open it.

"A gentleman in the parlor," said the bell boy, politely. "He wouldn't send no card, but I guess he's all right, Miss Marlowe."

Marion smiled and then paused to think a moment before she answered.

"Some one who wishes to surprise me, perhaps," she said, slowly. "Tell them to wait, please. I will be down in a minute."

CHAPTER IX.

MADAME LEOPOLD'S DETECTIVE.

When Marion reached the parlor she was surprised to find a young man, who was a perfect stranger, waiting to see her.

"Is this Miss Marion Marlowe?" he asked at once, as the young girl entered.

Marion bowed politely and glanced at him questioningly.

"I have been employed by Madame Leopold to trace her missing jewels," he said, in a very low tone, "and she tells me that you have information which may be of use to me."

As Marion listened, a hot flush crept into her cheeks.

"I asked Madame Leopold to give me twenty-four hours," she said, with dignity. "If I would not impart my information to her, I certainly would not to a stranger."

"But I am a detective," said the young man, quickly, "and if you do not tell me what you know you place yourself under suspicion, for

Madame Leopold tells me that you say you have seen her jewels."

The young girl drew herself up with a gesture of pride as she answered, and her eyes glowed with honest indignation.

"Madame Leopold is treating me very unkindly," she said, quietly, "and as for your suspicions, why, I shall have to endure them, for I refuse absolutely to tell what I know until to-morrow."

"Which will give the thief a chance to escape, I suppose," said the detective, with a sneer.

He had risen from his chair and was facing her angrily.

"I defend no thieves, sir; but I try to protect honest people!" said Marion, sternly. "I explained to Madame Leopold why I could not reveal my knowledge freely; you must excuse me from any further conversation on the subject."

She turned to leave the room, but the man stepped in front of her.

"Still you say you saw the jewels to-day," he said, sharply. "If this is the truth, I am justified in arresting you."

There was a brief moment's silence, and then Marion spoke. Her cheeks had paled slightly, but her voice was as firm as ever.

"I said that I thought I had seen the jewels to-day," she repeated, slowly, "and if that is sufficient to warrant you in arresting me, you have my consent to do so, but you will defeat your own ends, of that I can assure you."

"I guess you'll not do any arresting in this case, Tom," said a quiet voice from one end of the big parlor.

Marion and her companion turned instantly and confronted Henry Fairfax, who had been standing quietly behind a large double portierre.

For just a second the two men looked at each other, then, much to the girl's surprise, they shook hands cordially.

"Miss Marlowe will give you all the information you desire in half an hour," said Fairfax, quietly. "I had just called to see her, and found you were before me."

"So you slipped in and listened, you rogue," said the other, smiling. "Well, I'm sure you can't blame me for acting as I did—it's a rattling good case and means something more than money."

"I understand," said Fairfax, "but I do blame you, Tom! You ought to see by Miss Marlowe's face that she is absolutely innocent, and there's no excuse, even in our business, for annoying a lady."

"I'm sorry," said the fellow, with a remorseful glance at Marion, "but, nevertheless, I must come back soon and get the information that she has for me."

"You shall have it," said Fairfax, as the other man departed; then he turned and extended his hand gratefully to Marion.

"A thousand thanks, Miss Marlowe," he said, with a smile. "Your silence has saved me a deuce of a muddle! But how in the world did you recognize those jewels?"

"I have very quick eyes and a good memory," said Marion, laughing. "I knew that the bracelet was the madame's the minute she described it, but, oh, Mr. Fairfax! How did you come by them? I have racked my brain to find an explanation."

Instead of explaining, Mr. Fairfax mused a minute.

"I wish I could tell you all, but I can't," he said, slowly; then he stood for a moment staring at her with an eager expression.

"Will you trust me, Miss Marlowe?" he asked, after a silence, "and, oh, Miss Marlowe! will you do me a favor?"

"Why, certainly! Anything that I can," was the surprised answer. "For Miss Allyn's sake, if for no other reason."

A girlish blush stole over the young man's face at her words.

"The sweetest woman in the world," he said, in almost a whisper. "I hope some day to make her my wife, Miss Marlowe."

"Oh, I am so glad!" cried Marion, clapping her hands together, softly, "but what can I do for you? Pray tell me this minute!"

Mr. Fairfax looked at her earnestly, his face still flushed from the words he had spoken, and as he gazed into her eyes he became suddenly grave, as though the favor he was about to ask was an exceedingly large one.

"I want five hundred dollars," he said at last, "and I want you to give it to me unconditionally. I cannot begin to tell you what good it will do, neither can I guarantee a dollar in return but——"

Marion Marlowe stopped him by an impulsive gesture.

"Wait! I will go to my room and write a check," she said, quickly, "I ask no explanations, Mr. Fairfax; you can have it and welcome."

She darted away, leaving the young man staring after her.

"I knew she would do it," he whispered to himself. "She's the next to the sweetest girl in creation!"

"Well, is my information ready?" asked the detective, coming back, "or has the young lady changed her mind and decided not to tell me?"

"The young lady has told me, instead of you," said Fairfax, calmly, "and furthermore, Tom, I am the man who has the stolen jewels."

If a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet the detective could not have been more astonished.

"I'll tell you the story to-morrow," went on Fairfax, "but neither you nor Madame Leopold can get it out of me any sooner."

"But think, Fairfax, is that safe?" asked the detective in dismay. "Can't you possibly lay your bird any sooner than to-morrow?"

"See here, Tom," was the reply. "I've been on this case four days. The hotel employed me when the thing occurred, so the madame's detective isn't in it for a minute!"

"I guess you are right," was the dubious answer. "Well, I may as well drop out and save my strength; wouldn't dream of robbing you of the honor, old fellow."

"You couldn't," said Fairfax, with a beaming smile. "It doesn't belong to me. Miss Marlowe is the victor. To her alone belongs the glory of having caught the culprit."

The detective stared, but did not reply.

He heard Marion coming down the hall and hurried away before she saw him.

"Here is your money, Mr. Fairfax," said the noble girl, softly, as she held out a check. "Oh, I am so glad and thankful that I can be of use to you! If I could, I would relieve all the trouble in the world!"

"I believe it!" was the young man's fervent answer, "but if it is in my power you shall not suffer for this; nevertheless, that makes no difference in the nobility of your offer."

"No, it makes no difference," said Marion, calmly, "for I would divide my last penny in the cause of humanity."

CHAPTER X.

A SEARCH THROUGH THE BOWERY.

At eight o'clock that evening Marion was sitting in her room. She had dined by herself without waiting for her music teacher, as was her custom, for she could not bring herself to entirely forgive the woman's suspicious treatment.

"The idea of her employing a detective to interrogate me!" she cried, disgustedly. "It was not fair nor friendly. She might have trusted me."

She had no further time for reflections, for just then a note was brought to her door. It

was from the old countryman whom she had promised to assist, and, as quickly as she could, Marion took her hat and gloves and joined him in the parlor.

"We will go down the Bow'ry first," he said, as they started out. "There's a dance-hall down there where they said she might be. If we don't find her there we'll sarch the rest of the places."

"Oh, I hope we may find her!" said Marion, earnestly. "But we must not be discouraged if we don't succeed the first evening."

"Be you afeard of them places?" asked the old man, as they went along.

Marion's face paled a little, but she answered stoutly:

"I don't think I shall like to see them, of course, but I have sufficient courage to carry me through, and I do not believe that any one will harm us."

"They'd better not try," said the old man, straightening up. "Jeremiah Skinner ain't quite as young as he was onecet, but he kin fight a bit yet ef they git him cornered."

Marion looked at him shyly out of the corner of her eye. He was powerfully built and his frame was slightly bent, but she could readily believe that he was as brave as a lion.

About nine o'clock these two strange friends entered the door of a concert hall, one of the worst on the Bowery, which is saying considerable.

It was too early for much in the way of excitement, and as they took their seats at a small table the waiters eyed them curiously.

A few stragglers, men and women, came up and looked them over, some of them half maudlin with liquor, but all fairly polite in their manner.

"Ain't youse two in de wrong place, uncle?" asked a big, slouching fellow, as he came and rested one hand familiarly on the table.

"I reck'n we air," said Jeremiah Skinner, quietly, "but thar ain't no law agin our comin' in, is thar?"

"Nop—only the boss o' ther place don't run it as a restin' place exactly," said the fellow, grinning. "He expects you'll give up a dime or two fer settin' at his tables."

"Then we'll git up," said the old man, as he rose determinedly. "We come in ter look around, but thar don't seem to be anything wuth seein'."

"Oh, you come back a little later and you'll see something," said the fellow, roaring. "Danged if I don't believe the old hayseed is a sport! Did youse hear him say dat dere wasn't nothin' here wuth seein'?"

"Come back later, sporty," sang out another voice, "and don't forgit to bring that bit of calico wid yer."

"What'd ye say?" asked Jeremiah Skinner, as he wheeled around quickly.

"Nothin', not a word," said the fellow, grinning from ear to ear.

The old man turned back and grasped Marion firmly by the arm.

"This ain't no place for ye. I'm sorry I brung ye in here," he said, with a shudder.

"Oh, I don't mind a bit," said Marion, bravely, "but perhaps we'd better go on and come back later. It's just as that man said—no one comes in so early."

They went out into the street again and walked slowly along, the people on the street looking at them curiously as they passed.

"Here's another of the places that the chief told me," said Mr. Skinner, as he peered carefully at a number over a door and then referred to a card in his pocket.

"It looks like a saloon," said Marion, in some alarm. "Surely no woman would go in there. Why, it is a bar-room, Mr. Skinner!"

"Side door," said the old gentleman, reading from his card. "He underlined that per-

ticular. I reck'n it's just around ther corner."

They walked a little farther and then turned into the next street. Sure enough, there was a sign in red letters, "Family Entrance."

"Humph!" ejaculated the old gentleman, as he glanced at the words, "I calkerlate it's curus kind o' families that they have down here! Now, what Christian man would ever take his family into sech a rum-hole as that yender!"

"But we must go in!" said Marion, firmly. "If the chief put in on the list we must not pass it by. She may be in there, you know! Come on, I'm not afraid of anything!"

She almost dragged the old farmer towards the swinging door, for she was determined to miss no chance of finding his poor daughter.

As they stepped inside Marion uttered an exclamation of dismay, for they were in a small room without any furniture whatever.

There was a sort of a slide in the wall just in front of them and a narrow shelf that looked as if it had been placed there to hold beer pails and pitchers.

Suddenly a man's face appeared at the open slide.

"What d'yer want?" he asked, gruffly.

"Step up and speak out, Reuben."

"My name ain't Reuben," said Mr. Skinner, promptly, "an' if this is all the rooms you've got I don't want nothin'. A pretty sort of a place fer a man ter take his family. Why, I couldn't swing a cat by the tail in this little entry."

There was a click somewhere in the wall, and suddenly a door flew open.

"Thar, thet's better," said the old man, as he winked at Marion, "now we'll come in a minute ef you ain't no objections."

The room they entered was large and quite dark, but as the door closed behind them it was suddenly lighted. There were half a dozen small tables and a lot of chairs, but there was not a soul to be seen in the "family parlor."

"Too early, I guess," whispered Marion in Mr Skinner's ear just as a waiter came up and asked what they wanted. Without a word the old man turned toward the door.

"Hold on dere youse, ain't youse goin' ter treat de loidy?" asked the waiter, insolently.

"Yew mind yer biz" said Mr. Skinner, quietly. "We're out a sight seein', we ain't drinkin' this evenin'."

Marion had to laugh at the old farmer's coolness. He was a countryman, but for all that there were no sharpers too shrewd for him, and the sorrowful errand that he was on did not disturb his equanimity.

"Suppose we go back to that first place," said Marion, glancing at a clock. "See, it is after eight now—perhaps they have come in—and by buying some soda or something we can sit down and rest a little."

"Poor child, I reck'n you are tired," said the old man, kindly. "I wuz so eager myself tew find poor Annie that I clean forgot that you might be tired."

They went back into the concert hall, which was now fairly well filled, and never to her dying day could Marion forget that sad picture.

There were more women than men in the brilliantly-lighted room, and they were all talking excitedly and laughing shrilly.

One after another passed, as they sat at a table, and the old farmer gave them each a keen glance, and then shook his head sadly.

"Oh, how wretched and haggard they all look!" said Marion, in a whisper. "It does not seem possible that the world can contain so much misery."

The waiters were so busy now that they paid no particular attention to the pair, but occasionally some one stared at them and made some laughing comment.

"There's a gal that looks like Annie!" muttered the old man, suddenly, as he half rose from the table and began staring straight in front of him.

At that instant a band began to play loudly and with one accord almost every one in the place began singing and whistling.

Marion turned her head to follow the old man's gaze, and as she did so she started violently and bit her lips to keep from speaking.

Exactly behind her, but with their backs toward her, stood two men well known to her. They were Henry Fairfax and Madame Leopold's detective.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ARREST OF LIZ GREEN.

"It is Annie, I can swear to it," said the old man, in an undertone, and this time Marion turned around completely so that she could see the woman.

For just a moment she could hardly believe her eyes; then a second look revealed that she was right; it was the woman Liz Green, whom her companion had called "Annie."

"Why, you saw her to-day in the car," she tried to say, but the old man did not hear her; he had risen from his seat.

Suddenly Henry Fairfax touched the arm of his companion lightly. Marion and her escort were just behind them, and both noticed the motion.

"There's our thief," said Fairfax, in a loud, stern tone. "She has the ring on now —quick, Turner, arrest her!"

There was a shriek of dismay as the woman felt a hand on her arm; in a second it was taken up, until it seemed as if half the women in the room were shrieking.

The old man darted forward, with Marion at his heels. As the suspected girl half rose from the table, she found herself facing her own father.

"Annie! Annie!" cried the old man, in a ringing voice.

"My God! Father!" echoed the girl, as she dropped back into her chair. The next instant her glance fell on the face of Marion Marlowe.

"You're my prisoner, Liz," remarked the detective, sternly. "I want you for stealing Madame Leopold's jewels. You are wearing one of her rings this very minute."

The girl's eyes were riveted on her father's face. She neither heard nor heeded what the detective was saying.

"Take her around to the station house, Tom," said Fairfax again. Then he turned and, for the first time, caught sight of Marion.

"Great Heaven! You here! Why, what does this mean, Miss Marlowe?" he asked, quickly.

Marion pointed to the old farmer, who now had his arms around his daughter.

"I came with him—to find her," she answered, simply. "Oh, how dreadful for the poor man! I am afraid it will kill him!"

"Never mind him! You must get out of this!" cried Mr. Fairfax, decidedly.

He moved close to the old farmer, who was holding his daughter in his arms, and endeavoring to shield her as much as possible from the gaze of those who crowded about the table.

"I shall take Miss Marlowe home. I am her friend," he said, in the farmer's ear; "then I'll come back to the station house and do what I can for your daughter."

Five minutes later they were in the street, and he was hurrying Marion away from that wretched quarter.

"Oh, do tell me all about it," were her first words. "Why, do you know, I thought I would die when he said Liz Green was his daughter."

"What do you know of Liz Green?" asked Fairfax, quickly. "This is a curious mixup. I don't understand it at all, Miss Marlowe."

"Say, rather, a curious coincidence," was Marion's answer; then she told him her experience with the wretched woman.

"It was more than a coincidence; it was the hand of fate," said Mr. Fairfax, as she finished. "I may be superstitious, but I believe in that firmly."

"It is wonderful, anyway," was Marion's answer; "but so many wonderful things have happened in my life that I am beginning to look upon them almost with tranquillity."

"You certainly are remarkably cool," was the reply. "Why, that sight to-night was enough to break the heart of a veteran."

"Oh, I have grieved over them both all day," said Marion, sighing. "Someway the scene to-night was what I rather expected. I knew he would find her, and was half prepared for it. But the jewels, Mr. Fairfax; I am so anxious to know about them! It is dreadful for him to find her with this added disgrace."

"We can help him in that," said Mr. Fairfax, quietly. "To-morrow morning, in the Police Court, we will help her, you and I. My only regret is that we cannot clear her altogether."

"Do you wish me to come to court?" asked Marion, nervously.

"I beg that you will," was her escort's answer; "for it is only in the court-room that I can tell my story; and further, I wish you to be present to know what became of your five hundred dollars."

"Very well, I will come," said Marion, quietly. "Give me a memorandum of the place and the time you will expect me."

Mr. Fairfax complied with her request, and then looked at her silently for a moment. He was wondering how it was that she was so different from other women.

"A glorious girl," he muttered to himself. Aloud he simply remarked:

"You are a wonder, Miss Marlowe."

Marion smiled and then sighed. She was both sorrowful and happy. It had been a terrible day. She would be glad when it was over.

Madame Leopold was watching for her as she reached her door. She came out of her room, clad in her night robe and wrapper.

"I suppose you will never forgive me," she said, very sweetly; "but, my dear, I was so excited, I hardly knew what I was doing."

"Well, you should have trusted me for one day," was Marion's sad answer. "It is not pleasant to be suspected of dishonesty, madame."

"My dear child," cried the woman, penitently, "I did not suspect you. I just couldn't understand why you wouldn't tell me, and I sent a detective to you to try and scare it out of you."

Marion's red lip curled scornfully as she turned and faced the woman.

"Do I look like a coward, Madame Leopold?" she asked, proudly. "No power could scare a word from my lips when once I had decided that my silence was justifiable; and above all, I would be doubly firm in a matter that pertained to another person's honesty."

"Oh, I knew you were right," said the woman, humbly. "I should have waited, but I couldn't. I was too utterly miserable."

There were tears in her eyes as she uttered the last words, and in an instant all the tenderness in Marion's heart overflowed for her.

"Don't worry about it, madame," she said, holding out her hand. "You were nervous and excited, and—well—you did not know my nature. Another time and you will know me better."

"And you will tell me where you saw my jewels, will you not?" asked the woman, timidly.

"To-morrow morning at nine o'clock you shall know," said Marion, calmly. "There is the address of the court-room where you are expected to appear. The thief will be there—and so will your jewels."

CHAPTER XII.

THE COURT-ROOM.

When Marion entered the Police Court building the next morning she found Mr. Fairfax at the door waiting for her. Her glance swept over the big room eagerly, but at first she saw nothing. There was a blur before her eyes, caused by her manifold emotions.

Mr. Fairfax led her to a seat and then left her for a moment, and soon the blur cleared away and Marion began to see distinctly.

Madame Leopold was sitting up near the front with her lawyer, and her detective, Tom Burnham, was leaning over her shoulder.

Suddenly Marion caught sight of a stalwart figure, so conspicuous in the crowded room that she wondered how she had failed to notice it the moment she entered.

It was Jeremiah Skinner, the honest old farmer. He was standing as near as possible to the prisoner's pen.

"Poor old man," whispered the young girl to herself as she watched him; then she seemed to grow suddenly calm and a great desire to be able to help him in this hour of sorrow swept into her heart.

There were representatives of all nations grouped around the room—the poor, the wretched and the vicious seemed assembled together, and for what? To bear evidence to some crime of another.

"Oh, the misery of it all!" cried Marion, almost aloud. Then she sat up erect and stared at the scene before her. A door had been opened by a court attendant and a

straggling, squalid batch of prisoners entered.

Jeremiah Skinner raised his hand and peered at them as they filed into the pen, and in a few seconds he caught sight of his daughter Annie.

Marion held her breath, but her heart beat fast and furiously. For a moment she feared it would almost break with its burden of pity for this agonized father.

A dozen or more officers in uniform were swarming about, each intent upon looking after his own particular prisoners.

Suddenly Marion almost sprang from her seat. Her eyes dilated eagerly and her lips curved with pleasure.

An old, bent and wrinkled woman was the last prisoner to enter. As she hobbled into the pen there was an officer close beside her.

"It's Mother Nance!" cried Marion aloud. Fortunately, her nearest neighbors were foreigners, who did not seem to understand her.

Case after case was disposed of promptly; so promptly that the innocent country girl found herself questioning the justice of these extraordinary proceedings.

Charges were made and upheld; fines and penalties were inflicted, and all with such rapidity that it bewildered her senses.

At last "Liz Green" was called to the bar. It was the most important case of all, and in an instant the court-room was quiet.

Tom Burnham stepped forward and made his complaint.

"I arrested her last night. She was wearing a ring that had been stolen from this lady," he said, briefly. He pointed to Madame Leopold, who nodded her head.

In an instant Henry Fairfax was on his feet and rapidly explaining.

"I am a detective also, and helped to make this arrest," he said, quickly; "but I wish to say that this girl is only a dupe. She was wearing some of the stolen jewels, but she did not steal them."

The judge looked over his glasses questioningly, and Mr. Fairfax hurried on.

"This girl is in the employ of Old Mother Nance, the 'fence,'" he said; "her business is to coax thieves to take their booty to the old woman, and in return she is allowed to wear some of the cheapest of the jewels."

Liz Green hung her head. She was thoroughly frightened and ashamed. As the judge questioned her she could only answer with tears and monosyllables.

"Then why is she here?" he asked suddenly of Mr. Fairfax.

Henry Fairfax turned and pointed to the male prisoners' pen, where for the first time Marion discovered a familiar figure.

"We had to arrest her on suspicion," he said, briefly. "She was wearing the jewels, but here is the thief. The notorious Bob Bennett, if you please, Your Honor. It was he who stole the stuff—not the woman."

Sure enough, there stood Bob Bennett, the great, hulking fellow whom Marion herself had pointed out to the detective.

Madame Leopold sprang to her feet the instant she saw him.

"The very fellow!" she cried out, hysterically. "He was hired to wash windows at the Hotel Rosedale the very day that my gems were stolen."

"And he took them from your trunk," said Mr. Fairfax, calmly. "Liz Green is his sweetheart, and he told her where he got them, besides entrusting them to her to sell for him. I was put on the case the very next day, and by a stroke of good luck I tracked them straight to Liz. I threatened to arrest her, and she gave them all up but the ring, which she swore she had lost, and I was fool enough to believe her. Then——" Here Fairfax hesitated a minute, and a slight flush rose to his cheek, but he went on bravely, looking straight at "His Honor." "Then I saw my chance to win a little fame, and instead of restoring the gems to Madame Leopold at once, I made them aid me in another transaction. In other words, I knew that Old Mother Nance had a young girl imprisoned at her house, and some people had offered me a large sum of money to find out for them what the relationship was between Mother Nance and the girl. I used the gems for an excuse to get into the house. Both times I offered them for sale, and then refused to sell them. The last time I went there I succeeded in liberating the girl, whom I now know to be the daughter of respectable parents. Then I arrested old Mother Nance for having abducted the girl, and if that

charge is false, I guess I can find enough others to hold her."

"I guess you can," said the judge, smiling. "She is a wicked creature, and I am glad you have caught her."

"It took five hundred dollars to do it!" said Mr. Fairfax, suddenly. "She had papers and information in her possession that I wanted, judge, and the consequence was I had to bribe her to get them."

"And she let you arrest her for five hundred dollars!" cried the judge. "Why, old Mother Nance must be losing her cunning!"

The two detectives winked at each other.

"Oh, I swore that I wouldn't arrest her," said Fairfax, laughing, "and I didn't. I let my friend here have that inestimable honor."

There was a laugh throughout the court-room in which even the honorable judge joined, for there was no sympathy due the miserably wicked old woman.

"Five hundred dollars is a good sum for a young detective to put up," observed the judge, musingly, as he looked at Mr. Fairfax.

"It wasn't mine," answered the young man, promptly. "It was donated for the purpose by a lady, Miss Marion Marlowe."

He turned and looked at the young girl as he spoke, and in an instant every eye in the court-room was upon her.

For once in her life Marion did not feel embarrassed at her position. She was fairly thrilling with satisfaction at having made such good use of her money.

CHAPTER XIII.

A GENERAL EXPLANATION.

There was a brief legal discussion, and then both Bob Bennett and old Mother Nance were returned to the prison. Their cases were too important to be handled by a Police Court.

Liz Green was discharged with a reprimand from the judge, and she left the room weeping on the arm of her father.

Madame Leopold was so penitent that Marion could not help forgiving her, and she was as genuinely happy as her teacher over the restoration of the jewels.

"Oh, I am so glad you held them as you did," she said to Mr. Fairfax, as they were going back to the hotel, "for if you had returned them at once I should probably never have recovered the ring, and I prize it most of all for my dear mother used to wear it."

"Then my little scheme worked successfully all around," was the young man's laughing answer, "and instead of catching one rascal I have brought two to justice, to say nothing of having gained for one poor girl her freedom."

"Oh, it was grand!" cried Marion, happily; "I did not think that I ever could glory in another person's downfall but I do actually rejoice that old Mother Nance is in custody!"

"Well, she made it expensive for you," said Mr. Fairfax, gravely; "but, besides clearing Liz Green, I bought poor Maggie's freedom with your five hundred dollars, for the old hag even had the girl's birth certificate in her possession."

"Then she has returned to her parents?" cried Madame Leopold, eagerly.

"Unfortunately, no," was the young man's answer. "The people who were interested experienced a bitter disappointment. Maggie had been stolen beyond a doubt, but in spite of the certificate there is no trace of her parents."

"Well, my parents are hers now," said Marion, brightly, "and perhaps in time she will be able to find her real ones."

Suddenly Mr. Fairfax surprised them by bursting into laughter.

"I can't help thinking of that day at old Mother Nance's house," he said, roaring.

"Will I ever forget how you locked her in the cellar!"

"And then totally forgot her!" cried Marion, gayly. "Oh, I wonder how long she sat there with her rags before they released her?"

"Well, it was quite a time," said the young man, slowly, "for Mag was the only person in the house at the time you did it, so she had to depend on her next chance caller, and that happened to be no other than your humble servant!"

"What, you went back there, Mr. Fairfax?" asked Marion, in surprise.

"As soon as circumstances would permit," said the detective, laughing, "and the circumstances in the case were no other than Bob Bennett. I followed him from the station, but I assure you his route was circuitous. Oh, you did not realize that you were capturing a notorious rascal when you put me on his track, did you, Miss Marlowe? Why, do you know, I had been looking for him for nearly three days—ever since Liz owned up to me that he gave her the jewels!"

"And you caught him?" asked Marion, with a delighted smile.

"Yes, I saw him as he was just about to enter the house. There was another officer with me, and together we nabbed him."

"On what grounds?" asked Madame Leopold, who was listening intently.

"Oh, on general principles!" said the young man, laughing. "I had Liz Green's word and took chances on proving it. Then, while my friend was taking our 'quarry' to the station-house, I seized the opportunity to make my deal with old Nance, for I figured that there was no better time than when she was locked in the cellar."

He burst out laughing again, and Marion joined him.

"So you let her out, after all," she said, in great merriment.

"I let her out after I had secured her promise to give up the papers, and then I hustled up to you and borrowed that money."

"Not 'borrowed,' Mr. Fairfax!" cried Marion, quickly. "I gave it to you. It was well spent—every penny!"

"You are a noble girl," began Mr. Fairfax, but Marion stopped him with a fresh burst of enthusiasm.

"You risked a great deal, but I suppose you had to," she said, quickly. "Really, I am beginning to feel a great respect for detectives!"

"The end justifies the means," quoted Mr. Fairfax again, "so long as one does not really stoop to dishonorable measures."

"Which you will never do, I am sure," said Marion, brightly. "I would trust you anywhere, Mr. Fairfax, you are the soul of honor!"

"And you are the embodiment of kindness and generosity," said the young man, laughing; "but for your money, Miss Marlowe, I could have accomplished very little."

"I cannot understand a person having money and not putting it to good use," said the girl, quickly. "I only wish I had more, that I might do more good with it."

They had reached the hotel now, and Madame Leopold left them, after cautioning Marion not to forget her lesson.

A letter for you, Miss Marlowe," said the clerk, politely.

Marion glanced at the address and then smiled at Mr. Fairfax.

"Come into the reception-room while I read it," she said, gayly. "It is from Maggie Lewis, and oh, the post-mark makes me homesick!"

It was only a short note, telling of Maggie's happiness. Mr. and Mrs. Marlowe were treating her most kindly, and she was already in love with the cows and chickens.

"Whether I am really the daughter of old Mother Nance or not, I do not know," she wrote, in conclusion, "but this I do know, I have not a sentiment in common with her. I just feel that I am honest in every fibre of my being, so how can I be the daughter of such a mother?"

"Poor girl, she shall know the truth at once," said Mr. Fairfax. "We will both write her to-day and tell her all that has happened. She is as free as the pure country air which she is enjoying."

"And I have something to tell Miss Allyn just as soon as I see her, and that is that a certain young man must be watched very closely, for I fear he has strong desires to champion every poor girl in creation."

Marion's eyes were bright, but there were tears in her voice, for this young man's chivalry had appealed to her strongly.

"I guess he has," said Mr. Fairfax, with a blush, "but I am sure that Miss Allyn will quite approve of that failing."

"Indeed she will; dear, good Alma!" cried Marion, gayly. "Oh, I can hardly wait for an invitation to your wedding!"

There was another blush, and Mr. Fairfax fled. He was brave enough in some things, but this fair girl's fun embarrassed him.

Marion went to her room to write a letter to Maggie, but after removing her hat, she went over and stood by the window.

"Oh, you great, wicked city!" she said to herself, with a smile. "How beautiful you look in this golden sunlight! Still, if it were not for the sunlight, I should wish to die! There must be some bewildering glamour to deceive the senses, for a true glimpse of all the misery would drive one to insanity."

She went back to her writing table, feeling cheered and encouraged. The misery was, for a time, obscured by the sunlight. Only a few days later both Mother Nance and Bob Bennett were properly indicted, and both were tried and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Jeremiah Skinner and his daughter called upon Marion once. They were on their way to their country home, and both wept with gratitude as they bade her good-by.

Maggie Lewis never discovered her real parents after all, but she was as happy as a lark in Marion's old home, until she married an honest farmer and went to live near the Marlowes.

As for Marion, the noble girl went quietly on her way, doing good with the small fortune which she had in her possession, and endeavoring to cultivate her talents for usefulness in the future.

But the hand of fate was pointing her destiny, and new and thrilling episodes were soon to put her sterling qualities to the test once more.

THE END.

Readers who have just commenced to read MY QUEEN, are advised to procure the back numbers from No. 1 upwards, and read the entire life story of *Marion Marlowe*, as far as it has been published. By so doing you will become acquainted, not only with our heroine, but with the circle of friends who surround her, and who appear from time to time in the different stories. MY QUEEN is 5 cents per copy, at all newsdealers, or by mail, postpaid from the publishers. All numbers on hand.

STREET & SMITH,
238 William st., N. Y.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BY GRACE SHIRLEY

NOTE.—This department will be made a special feature of this publication. It will be conducted by Miss Shirley, whose remarkable ability to answer all questions, no matter how delicate the import, will be much appreciated, we feel sure, by all our readers, who need not hesitate to write her on any subject. Miss Shirley will have their interests at heart and never refuse her assistance or sympathy. STREET & SMITH.

"I am in such deep trouble that I do not know what to do, so I hope you will excuse me for coming to you, Miss Shirley. I am desperately in love with a young man who is a Demoerat, and as my father is a Republican, he declares that I shall never marry him. My lover will not change his politics even to win me as his wife. Do you think that he can really love me? M. S."

We see no proof of your lover's disloyalty in the fact that he will not change his views in order to please either you or your father. To every honest man, principle and self-respect come first. Your father must be very narrow in his views to object to the young man for that reason only. Individnal opinion is something that cannot be bartered, and to "agree to disagree" is one of the first acts of civilization.

"I am only eighteen years of age and as my figure is very pretty I take great pleasure in dressing nicely. My mother says I think too much of dress, and aways chides me when she sees me before the mirror. Do you think I am to blame for liking to dress well or that I should be scolded every time I try to make myself more attractive?
"LOTTIE F."

We believe in every man and woman having a proper respect for dress, but we do not think it wise to waste too much precious time in "primping" before a mirror. Learn to make your toilet in a speedy, business-like manner. No girl need take over half an hour to dress unless it is for a ball or party, or some special occasion. There is nothing quite so disgusting as to see a man or woman admiring themselves in a glass. It shows a weakness of the intellect and an absence of good taste and refinement. If you really think you are pretty, or that you have a fine shape, take all the pains in the world to hide your consciousness of it. Let others look at you admiringly and let them pay all the compliments. Self-flattery at best is very unhealthy.

"Will you please be so kind as to answer just one question for me? My lover says a man is unmanly who will tie a woman's shoe for her. I say that he is chivalrous and entirely gentlemanly. I am very anxious for you to decide the matter.
"ROSA."

We can see no reason in the world why a gentleman should not tie a lady's shoe if she wishes him to, but we judge that most young ladies prefer to attend to such matters for themselves. Knights and courtiers of old were often described bending humbly over some lady's slipper, so we presume they were in the habit of fastening their footgear for them, and no one ever accused them of being unmanly. We do not care to see a man playing lackey for his lady, but there are many attentions which he can pay her and lose no whit of his dignity—it depends entirely upon the demeanor of both while the service is being rendered. I have seen many a charming woman tie her husband's shoe without losing a vestige of her dignity, and I do not see why such courtesies cannot be mutual.

"I am a young lady of seventeen, and I have been at a hotel in the Catskills all summer, and made many acquaintances. I live with my parents, and my mother will not allow me to invite any of my newly-made friends to call upon me. Do you think there is any harm in keeping up such friendships? Of course, the acquaintances whom I speak of are all gentlemen—some of them really very charming fellows. E. C."

We are surprised to hear that you could spend a whole summer in the mountains and make no friends except gentlemen. Were there no young ladies for you to become acquainted with? We can understand your mother's caution perfectly, and would not care to criticize her judgment. When a girl of seventeen makes friends of no one but the men it looks a little as if she needed a mother's restriction. Why not cultivate the society of some nice young girls? When you can invite young people of both sexes to call upon you, and are as pleased to see one as the other, I have no doubt that your mother will feel differently, but your present preference for the society of young men is decidedly alarming.

"It is with a trembling heart that I pen this letter, for upon your answer will depend my future happiness. I am engaged to be married, and in a little quarrel with my lover last evening he

forgot himself and swore at me. Do please tell me what to do. Shall I forgive him? Do you think it will ever happen again, or is it likely that it was only a slip of the tongue? He has not apologized yet, and I do not think he intends to.
"A. C."

The last sentence in your letter influences our answer greatly. To swear before a lady is bad enough, but to actually swear at her is almost unpardonable. As a rule, we would not condone so heinous an offence, although much depends upon the young man's state of health and temperament. If your lover does not repent bitterly of his rudeness we advise you to get rid of him. If he will swear at you while you are only engaged, he is liable to knock you down after you are safely married.

"I am in love with two girls, a blonde and a brunette, and feel very sure that I could be happy with either. I am a blond myself. Which complexion do you think would suit me the best? Shall I choose my own kind or the brunette, who is my opposite?
WILL F."

Candidly, my young friend, we would not advise you to choose either of the two young ladies whom you mention in your letter. The fact that you love them both may lead you into serious trouble. For instance, at your first tiff with your wife you are bound to wish you had married the other, and no doubt this constant thought will make both of you unhappy. As a rule, we think it best for opposites to marry, although we have seen some marriages of "tow heads" as well as raven tresses turn out most admirably.

"I am very unhappy, and so I write you this letter. I am keeping company with a young man who is very jealous. He insists upon reading every letter I receive, and even opens them sometimes in my absence. I do not like it at all, but what can I do? I love him dearly, and I don't like to offend him.
L. S. T."

In our opinion, this young man is not worthy of any girl's love. The man who presumes to read correspondence not intended for his eyes is certainly not possessed of very good principles. When you are married to a man it will be time enough to show him your letters. Would he allow you to open and read his private correspondence? Ask him this question, and let us know what he answers. Always respect yourself and your own affairs. If you do not respect yourself you cannot expect to be respected.

"I am very much in love with a young man, but not so deeply but what I can see his faults. My lover is of the meddlesome, mischievous kind, who is always trying to make trouble between me and my other acquaintances. I do not know whether to call it jealousy or not, but he tells me unpleasant things that they say about me, and the result is that some of my best friends are going back on me. What can I do to break him of this habit? I love him dearly, but I am also fond of the others.
LAURA M."

Your lover must be a natural "monopolist." We think you can safely lay his peculiar traits at the door of jealousy. He is trying to turn others against you so that he will have you all to himself, which proves that he is a selfish, unreasonable fellow. Do not waste any time in putting a stop to his vicious habits, for it may lead in the end to your being entirely isolated. When the others have deserted you he may desert you too, as it is natural for such natures to lose interest after they have succeeded in accomplishing their purpose. The man who respects and honors your friends is alone worthy of your confidence, esteem and affection.

"Will you kindly tell me if it is improper to allow a young man to put his arm around you when you are in bathing together? I have been severely criticized at the seashore this summer, and all because I always insisted upon my lover or some other gentleman holding me tightly when I went into the breakers. I did not do it because I wished to be embraced, I merely needed assistance and protection, as I was frightened in the water.
ADA B."

Young people are apt to take too much license at the seashore. It depends entirely upon who the man is whether you should allow him to encircle your waist either on land or in the water. A father, husband, brother or even fiance can do this with propriety, but even then it is apt to cause comment from onlookers who do not know the relationship. Always conduct yourself modestly wherever you are. There is perhaps no place on earth where refinement is more necessary than at the seashore, and when once a young girl has the reputation of being immodest or careless, it is doubtful if she ever quite outlives it.

There are ropes provided at nearly all of the bathing places. Always depend upon these rather than upon the arm of a stranger or a casual acquaintance.

"I am deeply interested in the 'Marion Marlowe' stories, and think that 'Archie Ray is particularly lovely. I do not understand how a young, unsophisticated girl like Marion could refuse such a rich and handsome lover. I am sure if it had been me I would have said 'yes' in a minute. I am sixteen years of age, and I am waiting eagerly for a lover. If you know such a man as Archie Ray I wish you would tell him about me, and give him my address. ELLA P."

We are glad to hear that you are interested in the "My Queen" series, but, really, Ella, dear, this is not a matrimonial bureau! The young men like Archie Ray are choosing their own wives, and would not be apt to thank us for offering suggestions. Probably Marion Marlowe was too wise to accept a young man just because he was "handsome and rich." If Marion marries at all, we are sure it will be for love. She is too true a woman to marry for any other motive. We sincerely hope that your lover will come along after a time, but it will not hurt you to wait a few years, for you are too young to marry. When he does come, let him find you an intelligent, wise young woman who has recovered from the infatuation

of riches and mere manly beauty. Remember that "riches take wing" and "beauty is but skin deep." You should look for something more lasting in a husband.

"If it will not take up too much of your time, I would be very glad if you would answer my letter. I am engaged to marry a young man who is my second cousin. Do you believe it possible for me to love him as I might one who was no relation? He is the only young man who ever made love to me, and sometimes I think that I do not love him with the whole depth of my nature. Please tell me what to do, as I am in a quandary.
"INEZ C."

We advise you to postpone your marriage indefinitely, Inez. If it is a possible thing, you should travel. After you have met other men you can tell better whether you love your second cousin. We do not approve of relations marrying, especially where the essential quality and quantity of affection are so evidently lacking. Explain your feelings to your lover candidly. He may be impatient and annoyed at first, but if he is a sensible, just man, he will eventually agree that you are doing right in not marrying him until you are sure you love him. We sincerely hope that you will find another lover. The weight of responsibility in the ordinary marriage is heavy enough, but when blood relations marry it becomes far heavier. We do not understand how any young girl dares to shoulder such a burden.

"My lover is in the army, but he has not gone to China or the Philippines. When we go out together I never feel proud of him unless he has on his uniform, which is that of second lieutenant. He is not very good-looking, but the gay uniform seems to set him off, and his military bearing makes me almost love him. Can you tell me why I should feel so differently at different times? Is it because I do not really love him?
"LOTTIE."

You are not the first girl, Lottie, to be dazzled by "brass buttons" and "shoulder straps." When our boys came home from Cuba, after the Spanish-American war, the very plainest of them found scores of girls almost ready to throw themselves at their heads, yet many of them had never before had a sweetheart. Before the uniforms were laid aside these "soldier boys" were deluged with attentions, but now, alas! they seem to have drifted back to oblivion. The girls have had a surfeit of "military heels" and campaign hats, and their love, like the gold braid, has grown sadly rusty. If you do not love your sweetheart in his plain, every-day clothes we would advise you to break your engagement with him. This country cannot be continually at war in order to make her boys look attractive and also dazzle the eyes and addle the brains of a lot of girls who are hero worshippers.

"I have been engaged to a fellow for a year. We cannot afford to get married for at least a year or so more, and in the meantime he is simply making me miserable—he is so jealous of me. He does not like me to go out with my relatives, even, and if I dance or chat with other men when at a party my lover makes me miserable afterward with his questions as to what I said and did, and what the other fellow said and did, until I am nearly driven distracted. He says that it is only because we are not married, and that as soon as we are he will not feel that way. Do you think marriage would change this most unhappy trait in his character? FLORENCE P. B."

You seem to have about the same type of fiance as Mabel G., whose letter and the answer thereto you may apply to your own case. We do not believe that marriage will make any such change as your lover imagines. It seems to us that if he makes you unhappy now that he would make you doubly so if you were tied to him for life.

Insist upon his blotting these unreasonable notions from his mind entirely before marriage, and you will be taking the wisest possible stand.

"Your kindly advice to young girls has led me to judge that you will not object to helping a married woman in her troubles. I have only been married two years, but I have experienced enough unhappiness for a lifetime. My husband and I get on beautifully when alone, but during our married life either his mother or his aunt has been living with us for the greater part of the time. When they are here there is trouble continually. They do not like me, and they stir up discussions in a quiet, underhand way that makes it impossible for me to pick out any one particular act, but which makes both my husband and myself miserable. He tries to smooth them down, and to explain to me that they don t mean to be captious, and spends half his time trying to straighten things out.

"Now, won't you advise me what to do? I want to treat my husband's relatives rightly, but all my efforts to make myself congenial to them seem to be in vain. MRS. CATHARINE D."

Your husband has our sympathy. There are few positions more trying to a man's temper than to be placed between two warring women. Your own condition is certainly a very unpleasant one, and we are sorry that you have had to start married life under such circumstances.

Why do you not talk the matter over with your husband calmly and philosophicaly? If he loves you he will be glad to consider your ideas, and you certainly have first claim upon his consideration. Explain to him how foolish it is to spoil two lives for the sake of a third, and show him how the continual petty strife is embittering his and your existence. Ask him who is most dear to him—you whom he has sworn to protect and love or his relatives whose claim on him is only that of chance. He has deliberately selected you as his comrade for life—you have apparently given up your family for him, and he should not hesitate to relinquish his for you, if necessary. If you and he weigh the matter carefully you will doubtless come to some conclusion that will be mutually satisfactory.

"I am engaged to a young man two years older than myself. We get on beautifully except for one thing—he will insist upon showing his affection for me in public places. Now, I do not like that sort of thing, and have told him so plainly; but he claims that if I really cared for him I would be willing to have others know it. I wish you would please let me have your opinion in regard to this matter. CHLOE G."

You are quite right in your ideas, and your fiance should be made to realize this without delay. Caresses should be reserved for times when one is sure of privacy, and they will be all the sweeter for that reason. Nothing can be in worse taste than the manifestation of affection in public. It makes both parties ridiculous, and lowers them in the estimation of every one who observes them.

We are frequently annoyed by this sort of thing on the street cars, in railroad trains, and in the theatres, and the woman who permits it lowers herself instantly. People who are in love frequently act foolishly, but there is no excuse for their doing so in public.

"I am in great perplexity, and must ask you to help me out. I know that my betrothed cares a whole lot for me, but recently my attentions have seemed to annoy him. I cannot mention any one particular thing, but sometimes I seem to feel instinctively that my kisses and caresses are unwelcome. He is not particularly demonstrative himself, but when we were first engaged he apparently liked to have me show how much I thought of him. Can't you tell me what I ought to do? Shall I ask him what is the matter?
"CLAIRE W."

You have probably been too lavish with your caresses. No man wants a woman to be too generous with hugs and kisses. Sweetmeats are not desirable for a steady diet, and you should not feed your lover on them continually.

Be more chary with your tributes of affection, and you will soon find that he values them more than ever. Over demonstrative and compliant women rarely hold a man's affection for a lifetime. If your lover has to wait for a kiss or go without one occasionally, he will think them much sweeter than if they are lavished upon him incessantly.

"I have just become engaged to a young man with whom I am deeply in love. My parents refuse to consent to the engagement until they have inquired into his life and business. My fiance resides in another city, and I have not allowed my parents to make the investigation they wished, because it seemed to me that it would simply be an insult. I love him and he loves me, and I think that is all that is necessary —don't you? MAY W."

No, May, we do not think that love is all that is necessary. Your parents have your best interests at heart, and their desire to become assured that this man is a desirable one for you to marry is evident proof of their affection. If your intended is a right-minded man he will be very willing that they satisfy themselves in regard to him and will assist them to do so.

If his life has been stainless, his habits good, and if his income warrants his marrying, and you and he give them proof to this effect, then you might consider further objection uncalled-for. If you have faith in your lover you should welcome their desire to prove his worthiness.

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